

Message Text

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64

ACTION AF-07

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R 161230Z OCT 74

FM AMEMBASSY CAPE TOWN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4076

INFO AMCONSUL DURBAN

AMCONSUL JOHANNESBURG

AMEMBASSY NEW DEHLI

AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

AMEMBASSY LAGOS

AMEMBASSY LONDON

UNCLAS CAPE TOWN 0636

E.O.11652:N/A

TAGS :PFOR,SGEN/SF

SUBJ :GOVERNMENT'S SPORTS POLICY

BEGIN SUMMARY: ONGOING SAG MANEUVERING TO INDUCE INDIA INTO DAVIS CUP FINALS, COUPLED WITH SIGNIFICANT SHIFT IN FAVOR OF INTEGRATED SPORTS BY MAJOR OPPOSITION PARTY, FORMS BACKGROUND TO PARLIAMENTARY DEBATE ON SAG SPORTS POLICY. IN TIGHTROPE WALKING PERFORMANCE OCT 14, MINISTER OF SPORT KOORNHOF ANNOUNCED NEW GOVERNMENT CONCESSIONS WHICH ARE STEPS IN RIGHT DIRECTION BUT NO 'BREAKTHROUGH' SOUGHT BY CRITICS OF GOVT AND INTERNATIONAL SPORTS COMMUNITY. END SUMMARY.

1. OCT 14 PARLIAMENTARY DEBATE ON BUDGET FOR MINISTER OF SPORT AND RECREATION WAS PRECEDED BY UNITED PARTY (MAJOR OPPOSITION PARTY) POLICY STATEMENT THAT SPORTS AFFAIRS SHOULD BE LEFT TO SPORTSMEN THEMSELVES WITHOUT POLITICAL INTERFERENCE. STATEMENT WIDELY INTERPRETED TO MEAN THAT UNITED PARTY NOW JOINING SMALLER PROGRESSIVE PARTY IN SUPPORTING INTEGRATED SPORT AT ALL LEVELS.

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2. SPORTS DEBATE ALSO CONDUCTED WHILE UNOFFICIAL GOVERNMENT REPRESENTATIVE, SA INDIAN BUSINESSMAN A.S. PILLAY, IN INDIA ATTEMPTING (PROBABLY UNSUCCESSFULLY) TO NEGOTIATE DAVIS CUP COMPROMISE. DURING DEBATE GOVERNMENT ISSUED TEXT OF TELEGRAM SENT BY PRESIDENT OF SA LAWN TENNIS FEDERATION TO INDIAN COUNTERPART WITH APPROVAL MINSPO RTS KOORNHOF. TELEGRAM READS IN PART THAT 'WHERE DISCRIMINATION ON GROUNDS OF RACE OR COLOR MIGHT STILL APPLY, STATED BASIS AND OBJECT OF (GOVERNMENT SPORTS) POLICY IS TO MOVE AWAY FROM IT'.

3. 'MOVE AWAY' FROM RACIAL DISCRIMINATION IS ILLUSORY BECAUSE, AS WITH SO MUCH ELSE IN SOUTH AFRICA EMPHASIS NOW BEING PLACED ON 'NATIONAL' DISTINCTIONS (NATIONS BEING WHITE, VARIOUS AFRICAN ETHNIC GROUPINGS, COLORED AND INDIANS). ACCORDING TO KOORNHOF, GOVERNMENT SPORTS POLICY APPARENTLY WILL ALLOW MORE 'NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS' IN WHICH LEADING BLACK SOUTH AFRICAN TEAMS WILL PLAY WHITE SOUTH AFRICAN COUNTERPARTS. KOORNHOF IN FACT ANNOUNCED PLANS FOR 'MULTI-NATIONAL' SOCCER CHAMPIONSHIP AND STATED THAT BLACK TEAMS COULD PLAY AGAINST WHITE NAMAL RZPBY SELECTIONS. IN TERMS OF COMPETITION WITH FOREIGN TEAMS, KOORNHOF RESTATED THAT ALL SA SQUADS WILL BE SELECTED ON MERIT (THAT IS, POTENTIALLY INTEGRATED) EXCEPT FOR CRICKET AND RUGBY FOR 'HISTORICAL' REASONS. OPPOSITION DEBATERS SOUGHT TO CAUSE KOORNHOF AND OTHER GOVERNMENT SPEAKERS TO STUMBLE OVER IN CONSISTENCIES OF GOVT'S PLANS, NOT A DIFFICULT TASK CONSIDERING THAT DESPITE PHRASEOLOGY NEW SPORTS POLICY DOES NOT SIGNIFICANTLY VARY PATTERN OF RACIAL DISCRIMINATION NOW IN EFFECT. CHANGES ENUNCIATED BY KOORNHOF DO NOT ALTER FACT THAT WITH FEW EXCEPTIONS OUTLINED ABOVE SA SPORT REMAINS RIGIDLY SEGREGATED.

4. COMMENT: LATEST MOVES ARE CONCESSIONARY, THOUGH INSUFFICIENT TO MEET DEMANDS OF WORLD OPINION. GOVERNMENT'S GREATEST OBSTACLE IN MOVING TOWARDS MORE LIBERAL SPORTS POSITION APPARENTLY WELL-DUG-IN-HEELS OF NATIONALIST PARTY CONSERVATISM LED BY MP DR. ANDRIES TRUERNICHT, WHO HAS PREVIOUSLY STATED HE WOULD LEAVE PARTY IF 'MERIT SELECTION' FOR ALL SPORTS INTRODUCED. INTERESTINGLY, FIRST PERSON TO BE ASKED FOR REACTION ON SPORTS DEBATE BY PRESS WAS TRUERNICHT, WHO REPORTEDLY SAID THAT THERE WAS 'NO LIKELIHOOD' OF HIS LEAVING NP AT THIS

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STAGE. HE STATED THAT HE WAS 'VERY SATISFIED WITH ACCENT LAID ON PLAYING OF SPORT WITHIN CONTEXT OF MULTI-NATIONALISM.'

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